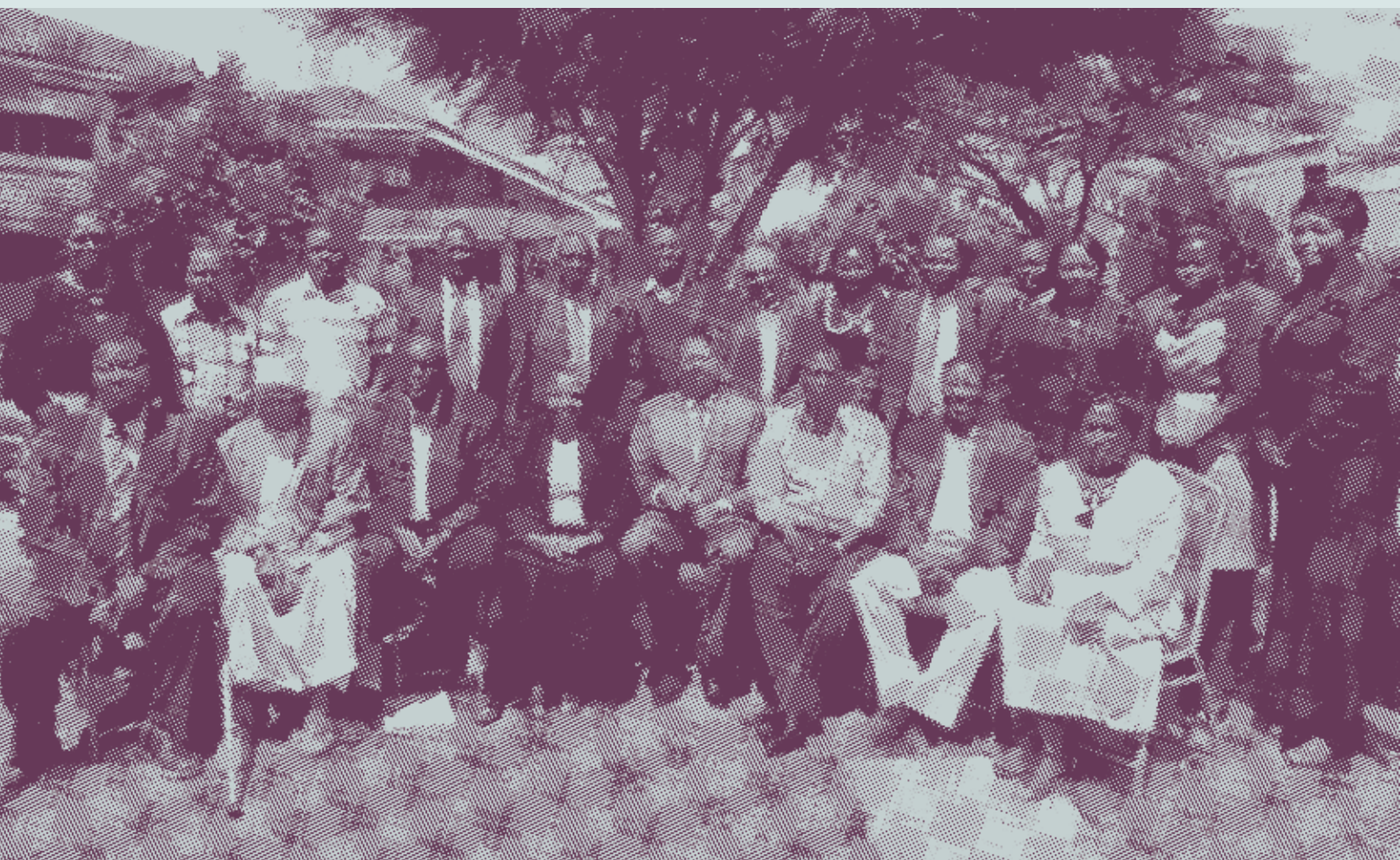


SMALLHOLDER FARMERS ENGAGE GOVERNMENT: *THE KENYA NATIONAL FARMERS FEDERATION AT WORK*

Violet Nyando



The Kenya National Farmers Federation has implemented an EU-funded food security project aimed at building up the policy dialogue capacity of Kenyan farmers. The federation has facilitated the participation of all agricultural sector actors in policy development and implementation, to improve government support towards agricultural sector growth and development.

Cover KENAFF leadership and technical staff attending the awareness creation workshop

The Kenya National Farmers Federation (KENAFF) is a non-profit democratic member-based organisation of Kenyan farmers representing the interests of more than 2 million farming families. The federation envisions a vibrant agricultural sector with improved livelihoods achieved by working for change and promoting agri-business through targeted interventions.

The farmer empowerment project

From February 2014 to December 2015, the Eastern African Farmers Federation (EAFf) implemented an EU-funded food security project, *Enhancing Opportunities of EAFf in Effective Policy Dialogue Engagement for Food Security Governance and Improvement of Rural Livelihood*. The project's objective was to strengthen the capacities, engagement and influence of EAFf's member organisations on food security and nutrition policy issues.

KENAFF implemented this project in Kenya, which aimed at building up the policymaking and dialogue capacity of farmers and farmer leaders, creating awareness about government national budget allocation to agriculture, capacity enhancement in evidence-based lobbying and advocacy activities, as well as creating platforms for policy dialogue. The experience presented here demonstrates how farmers

and stakeholders can be enabled to effectively engage with government.

In 2010, Kenya's new constitution established a decentralised system of government and, as such, agricultural functions were fully devolved. However, while Kenya's County Government Act (2012) and the Constitution (2010) clearly defines the process of institutionalising public participation in county governance systems, modalities for citizen participation have not been set, and there has been a pervasive inability to appreciate the fundamental shift of putting power in the hands of the citizens. This issue needs to be addressed at national and county levels.

KENAFF is one of the membership-based organisations working to meet this challenge by developing the capacity of farmers to articulate their issues and participate in important policy processes. The federation's strategic plan aims to facilitate the participation of agricultural sector actors in policy development and implementation. In doing so, it addresses internally generated challenges, such as a lack of capacity and sector disintegration, absence of structured forums for participation, inadequate civic education, as well as a general lack of information about ongoing activities.



An innovative approach and strategy

Several attempts have been made to provide opportunities for rural farmers to be involved in decisions affecting economic development, but have had limited success. An analysis of these attempts resulted in ideas for more innovative solutions and KENAFF became involved in implementing the EAFF-EU project.

KENAFF chose the Public-Private-Producers-Participation (4Ps) approach in implementing this project because it involves key stakeholders, including government representatives, KENAFF members and private sector agricultural stakeholders. It is also an approach that provides a platform for inclusivity along the agricultural product value chain.

The multi-stakeholder consultative strategy resulted in structured meetings and workshops where stakeholders could share and discuss issues affecting the agricultural sector in their counties. The strategy was effective because different views could be expressed and participants could build a consensus, which created a sense of ownership, legitimacy and support for decisions made.

This innovative approach was piloted in five counties: Bomet, Kakamega, Kwale, Murang'a and Siaya. These areas were selected because of their unique agro-ecological zones and political orientations, and because they had been involved in previous projects, so there were organised groups in place that could easily be mobilised. This helped in managing the limited time and resources allocated to the project.

Participants and stakeholders were from organisations associated with KENAFF and included the Kenya Livestock Producers Association, Kenya Millet and Sorghum Growers Association, Kenya Agro-industry and Agribusiness Alliance, Cereals Growers Association, National Potato Council of Kenya and members of the KENAFF Bomet, Kakamega, Kwale, Murang'a and Vihiga county associations. Members were drawn from these associations because they

represent large constituencies; they have been involved in previous KENAFF projects; and were well placed to share experiences and information with members not directly participating in the project. These associations were also active in the ongoing projects in these counties before the EU-EAFF project was initiated there. Some of the groups they represented later engaged in policy dialogue for the project.

The Innovative Farmer Advocacy Consultative Tool (FACT)

KENAFF's technical staff customised the AGRITERRA-designed FACT tool to develop training materials on advocacy and engagement for use by farmers and other stakeholders. In 2014, 30 participants were selected for training using this tool from the value chain producer business groups in the five counties. It was agreed that this number would ensure effective facilitated learning. Inclusivity was guaranteed by ensuring that a third of the participants were women. Participants were invited 2 weeks in advance and given clearly defined objectives, programmes, logistical information and advice about their involvement. The training workshop on FACT in the selected counties combined theory with practical sessions to demonstrate the process.

In June 2014, KENAFF's county coordinators mobilised the 30 participants who had been trained on the FACT methodology to attend a follow up meeting. This enabled participants to develop proposals to facilitate engagement with government. Two meetings were conducted in each county. The first meeting identified issues affecting stakeholders and resulted in a list of policy issues. The second meeting prioritised these policy issues and policy proposals were developed. Those presenting these proposals to the government were identified and included members of the KENAFF technical staff, KENAFF County Leadership and other stakeholder representatives.

Two months later, in August 2014, KENAFF's leadership and the county technical team met

Left The Bomet County Governor visiting Ndaraweta

Middle The KENAFF County Coordinator and the Ndaraweta Producer consulting the Ndaraweta Producer Business Group

Right Members of the Ndaraweta group and government officials at the cheque presentation event

government officials and presented the policy proposals. A copy of the proposal was sent in advance to government officials so that they could prepare a response. In most of the counties, the proposal targeted the decision-maker, i.e. the county governor. Officials of the County Ministry of Agriculture responsible for the agricultural agenda attended these presentations, and other ministry representatives became involved when issues touched their mandates.

Success stories

In Bomet, the county government considered the proposal presented by Ndaraweta Cooperative Society and agreed to support the setting up of a cottage industry. The Governor provided KES 2 million (€17,200) to procure land for a dairy and potato processing plant and processing machines and equipment. In Kwale county, the county government agreed to collaborate with KENAFF to procure air tight packaging bags so cereal growers could reduce on post-harvest losses.

At the same time, in Murang'a, the county government agreed to subsidise fertilisers and seeds so that smallholder farmers could access affordable, high quality certified seeds and fertilisers. Plans were made

to help young farmers obtain dairy cattle and start their own businesses through the initiative 'one cow-one youth'. And in Vihiga and Kakamega counties, the governments have agreed to work with farmers when developing policies that affect them.

But among the positive results, it is also possible to say that KENAFF's technical team, farmers and stakeholders became aware of the difficulties in the public policy making process, its timelines, procedures, requirements, obligations, rights and responsibilities – including the constitutional and legal provisions for public participation. Targeted participants acquired knowledge (theory) and skills (application) about FACT. The facilitators used the domesticated FACT tool so participants could understand and demonstrate their knowledge learned. In terms of enhanced organisational learning, we have seen that through the dissemination of information about FACT, participants continued learning and became more efficient in applying it. Stakeholders were able to objectively validate their issues and generate specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely (SMART) policy proposals. The project provided a framework for inclusivity as the one third women inclusion gender rule was always observed.

Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA-private sector)

The KEPSA Agricultural Sector Board represents the wider agricultural sector, drawing membership from every segment of the value chain. Therefore, the KEPSA representative was invited to the initial sensitisation meetings to gain knowledge about the budget making process in order to pass the same on to other members not in the project.

Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation

Agricultural researchers were also invited to the initial meetings in order to gain knowledge on the budget making process and also, by extension, join platforms where farmers are engaging policy makers – especially in lobbying when more funding for research is needed.

Agriculture, Food, Fisheries Authority (AFFA-regulator)

As a regulator, AFFA was invited to the initial meetings in order to gain knowledge on how farmers work as it was a new authority that had been established after devolution. Secondly, it was important to have them on board because as regulators, they oversee most agricultural policy and regulation implementation.

Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries (national government)

Farmers are the key stakeholders in the agricultural sector. The Agriculture Ministry provides directions on how the sector needs to grow in consultation with the agricultural stakeholders. The national government, through the Ministry, needs to understand how KENAFF works closely with the county government for purposes of pushing the agricultural development agenda at the county level.

County Governments of Bomet, Kakamega, Kwale, Murang'a and Vihiga

The county governments represent the office bearers at the lower levels of government who are in close contact with members of the public. They were included to create an avenue for agricultural sector players to engage closely with county governments on policy issues. This process provided publicity for both KENAFF and other agricultural stakeholders. It was also important to solicit their support early as the projects would later be implemented in their areas of jurisdiction.

EAFF

This project was co-sponsored by the EU and EAFF and it was important to have EAFF at the meetings for two reasons: observer functions to ensure that the consultant delivered on the terms of engagement, and also to offer technical and financial assistance.

In Vihiga and Kakamega, the local governments have agreed to work with farmers when developing policies that affect them.

Sustainability and replicability

KENAFF's analysis showed that top management supported the process from the beginning, and supported the technical staff and the county leadership in implementation. In parallel, the establishment of an engagement platform for government and members of the public created a system for evidence-based advocacy and lobbying. The levels of trust and appreciation between the public and private actors increased.

The framework established for private sector engagement with government contact points can be used in the future. These platforms have expanded in representation and through networking and collaborations, they have gained legitimacy and trust in the eyes of county governments.

But this is not to say that there are no difficulties. In terms of facilitation resources, it is clear that empowerment through civic education requires time, commitment and resources. The time allocated for FACT training was insufficient. We also saw logistic challenges: there were cases of participant oversubscription and target participants being replaced by those who did not fit the criteria. In some cases this distorted logistics. And there were also politics and power plays involved: some government officials tried to dominate discussions and others caused delays through non-commitment and non-adherence to appointments.

In short, we have seen that civic education is important and awareness and capacity building is essential because it enables people to work for their rights and take up their obligations. When individuals and organisations conduct structured and objective engagements with government officials, they have an opportunity to establish the trust that will facilitate current and future engagements.

In this particular project, it was important to have a professional and skilled facilitator to guide negotiations during policy engagements. Evaluating and nominating programme participants needs careful consideration to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency. The public policy development process requires commitments of time, finance and human resources and calls for collaboration and partnership.



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